

A U S T R A L I A N G A R D E N H I S T O R Y

JOURNAL OF THE AUSTRALIAN GARDEN HISTORY SOCIETY



Elery Hamilton-Smith collection

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Cover: This early coloured view of the Town Cave Gardens, Mount Gambier, was first published in the 1930s. See article on 'The Cave Gardens of Mount Gambier' opposite.

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The Australian Garden History Society was formed in 1980 to bring together those with an interest in the various aspects of garden history—horticulture, landscape design, architecture and related subjects. Its prime concern is to promote interest and research into historic gardens as a major component of the National Estate. It aims to look at garden making in a wide historic, literary, artistic and scientific context.

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THE CAVE GARDENS OF MOUNT GAMBIER

The south-east of South Australia, now famous as a source of fine red wines, is made up of marine limestones, and like most limestone terrain, the landscape is strongly influenced by solution. Thus, one sees closed rounded depressions (known as dolines), runaway holes into which rainwater drains, circular lakes with precipitous walls, cave entrances, and, near the coast, springs discharging immense volumes of water. All of these are characteristic of landscapes formed by solution, commonly known as karst. As a side-effect, the solution process leaves behind the insoluble components of the limestone, and these form fine red soils known as *terra rossa* – which in turn provides the ideal conditions for wine-growing. The whole region is permeated by groundwater, so that one might liken it to an immense sponge largely submerged in a pond of water. The level of the water has varied from time

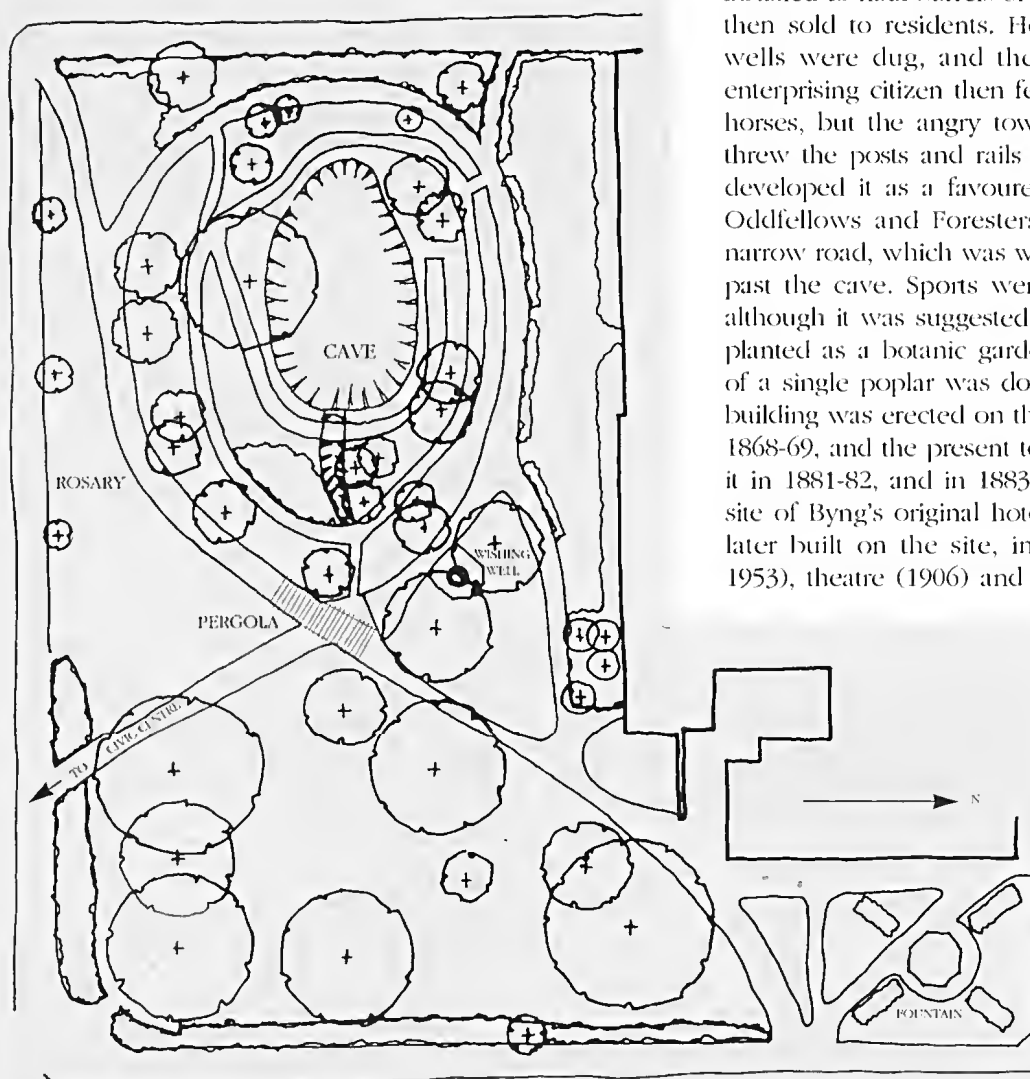
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to time, and is now generally lower than when the region was first settled by Europeans. All this is simply by way of introduction to several of the many holes in the sponge, each of which has provided the focal point of a garden.

The Town Cave Gardens

The Mount Gambier Town Cave provides ready access to the groundwater and it is said to have been a popular site for the Bunganditj people who lived in the region prior to the coming of Europeans in 1840 or early 1841, when Stephen Henty arrived from Victoria with a team of men and 400 head of cattle. They built a hut and stockade on the western side of the cave, and camped there until dispossessed in 1845. The police followed in the mid 1840s, firstly using Henty's buildings, the replacing these with their own building. They were in turn followed by John 'Black' Byng, who built a primitive hotel on the eastern side of the cave thus becoming the first hotelier of the new township, which progressively grew up around the cave site. The population grew rapidly, so that in 1856, the police complex became the first school under the direction of Mr. James Smith and with an enrolment of 30 pupils.

Steps were cut in the cave wall by local businessman W.A. Crouch in order to reach the water, and a windlass installed to haul barrels of water to the surface which were then sold to residents. However, it was not long before wells were dug, and the water trade diminished. One enterprising citizen then fenced the area as grazing for his horses, but the angry townspeople tore down the fence, threw the posts and rails into the water of the cave, and developed it as a favoured picnic spot. In the 1860s the Oddfellows and Foresters Hall was built nearby, and a narrow road, which was widened in the 1870s, constructed past the cave. Sports were held there in the 1860s, and although it was suggested in 1865 that the area should be planted as a botanic garden, little other than the planting of a single poplar was done for many years. The Institute building was erected on the northern side of the reserve in 1868-69, and the present town hall was erected adjacent to it in 1881-82, and in 1883-84, Jens Hotel was built on the site of Byng's original hotel. Various other structures were later built on the site, including the town baths (1898-1953), theatre (1906) and the fire station. A grand 74 feet



Schematic plan of the Cave Gardens, Mount Gambier



Umpherston Cave, Mount Gambier

Elery Hamilton-Smith

high flagpole also graced the gardens from 1883 until 1926, and was used to signal the arrival of ships at Port MacDonnell and of mails at Mount Gambier itself.

An important addition which has survived to the present day was the marble fountain presented to the city by Captain Robert Gardiner. This was designed and constructed by a monumental mason in Carlton, Melbourne – one A.A. Sleight. It was then shipped to Port MacDonnell, accompanied by four tradesmen to carry out the final erection, and officially ‘opened’ by the Mayor, Cr. A.F. Laurie, on Wednesday, 18 June 1884. It is claimed to be the first large marble fountain constructed in Australia.

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At one stage the Council cut the tops from the gum trees growing on the reserve, and although this made the town hall more visible, it was seen by many residents as destroying the natural beauty of the area. In 1892 a series of garden seats was installed and fifty flowering gums were

planted in the following year. A little later, some 44 shrubs were also planted, and in reporting this, the local press noted that at last the trimmed gums were developing regrowth and doubtless the reserve would soon ‘assume a more cheerful look’. Further planting, including tree ferns from Victoria, took place in 1896. Paths were developed and various other plantings followed, of which perhaps the most important were the roses of 1909.

The present day shape of the reserve was essentially established by W.D. Robinson in 1925, with probably only three significant changes since. The cast-iron pergola was presented to the city by Mrs Robert Hutton in 1933. In much more recent years, there has been a progressive increase in the number of Australian species being planted in the gardens. The most major change occurred in the 1980s when the new Civic Centre was built adjacent to the south-eastern corner of the gardens. This led to closure of the streets at that intersection, and construction of an appropriate forecourt for the new building with the erection of new sculpture, flagpoles and lighting. The old-style charm of the gardens now merge at this corner into the contrasting modernity of the new Centre.

Umpherston Cave

James Umpherston arrived in Mount Gambier in 1860, and in 1869, moved to a property on the eastern fringes of the township. He was a leader in the town, being president of

the show society for many years, a member of the state parliament and chairman of the district council. He saw the doline adjacent to his property as a potentially attractive place, purchased it in 1886, and commenced to beautify it for the benefit of the townspeople. A wooden staircase was built to simplify access, and a pathway cut as a spiral around the walls, giving access to the lake which then occupied about a third of the area. A boat was kept on the lake, and the cave became a popular recreational venue. Then over the years, it gradually fell into disuse and disrepair and as the regional groundwater level dropped, so the lake disappeared.

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In 1958, the area including the cave was purchased by the State Government as a regional headquarters for the Woods and Forests Department. The Social Club of the Department became concerned about the condition of the cave and, seeing its potential, commenced work on its restoration. Many thousands of hours of work have replaced the stairs, cleaned up the doline area, replanted

where necessary and installed barbecues. Plantings again provide a mix of native and exotic species, including palms, pines, deciduous trees, acanthus, cacti, hydrangeas,

Umpherston's original vision
of the cave as an attractive and
popular pleasure ground is
once more a reality

and fuchsias, along with gum trees, acacias, grevilleas and banksias. The result is that Umpherston's original vision of the cave as an attractive and popular pleasure ground is once more a reality. A visitor centre has now been built and conducted tours, generally arranged through the local tourist information centre, are available, particularly for schools and other educational groups.

Engelbrecht Cave

Father Julian Tenison Woods, in his *Geological Observations in South Australia*, published in 1861, provided what appears to be the first published description of this cave under its earlier name Vansittart Cave. This name honoured pioneer landowner Captain Spencer Vansittart, who sold (at a very low price) 20 acres of his land to the town for what is now the city's major park.

Aerial view of Umpherston Cave, Mount Gambier





Town Cave Gardens, Mount Gambier, pictured early this century

Dr. Edward Wehl, pioneer doctor, flour miller, farmer, magistrate, first chairman of the district council and brother-in-law of Ferdinand von Mueller, was responsible with four others for the exploration of this cave in 1864. Charlie Grosser, who was ten years old at the time, described many years later this first expedition:

I can clearly remember how the current caught the canoe and carried us along as soon as we got into the stream. We must have gone 200 yards, travelling directly towards the Blue Lake. The stream took several turns, and the current was so strong we had great difficulty in getting back.

With due respect to Mr. Grosser's memory, there is no stream in the cave, and the accessible lake measures less than 20 metres on its greatest dimension. Scuba divers explored the cave in 1979, and swam through a narrow submerged tunnel for some 60 metres, emerging into a further lake some 50 metres in length. The dive is a difficult and hazardous one, suitable only for extremely experienced cave divers. Regrettably, Grosser's description bears no resemblance to this, or indeed any other known cave in the region. Father Woods' description is also in agreement with the cave as it is today, so one cannot even evoke changed conditions to explain Grosser's lapse of memory.

Engelbrecht came to Mount Gambier in 1868 and some years later purchased Dr Wehl's flour mill which stood near the cave and converted it to a distillery. In due course the cave became a tip, receiving the waste from Engelbrecht's distillery along with other miscellaneous rubbish. It is probably one of the few caves to be named after someone responsible for its gross pollution! I first entered it in the early 1950s, worming my way through a mountain of old galvanised iron and other refuse.

It remained in this state until 1979 when the Lions Club of Mount Gambier undertook to clean and rehabilitate the

whole site. This work was then continued by the Lifeline Organization, assisted by trainees from Heritage Industries Inc. Finally, in 1986, the cave was opened to the public, with an attractively planted garden and wooden steps into the cave, which is tastefully lit for display to the public. In this case, the doline has been planted only with Australian species, and these have grown rapidly, so that today, the cave entrance is surrounded by a dense growth of bush. This includes eucalypts, melaleuca, pittosporum, grevillea, acacia, correa, tree-ferns and various other genera. The relatively flat ground around the doline is planted as lawn with scattered trees, some of Australian origin. The site now provides a magnificent demonstration of how thoroughly an almost totally degraded site can be rehabilitated. It is also an excellent example of the submerged caves of the lower south-east and the only one which is so readily accessible to the public. Tours of the cave are operated as a tourist attraction by volunteer guides, and the income from cave tour admissions now serves to support the Lifeline organization. The access into the cave has since been extended and an interpretive centre explaining various aspects of the cave is planned.

Elery Hamilton-Smith

Acknowledgments

Although the author has a long personal acquaintance with this interesting series of parks, this note owes a great debt to Les Hill, Mount Gambier's resident historian. Much of the information here is from Les's 1972 book, with the appropriate title of *Mount Gambier: The City Around a Cave*. The description of the submerged sector of Engelbrecht Cave is from Lewis and Stace, *Cave Diving in Australia*. Further information was provided by the Woods and Forests Department and Hans Dorgelo of Lifeline.

STATE NEWS

South Australian Branch

Twilight Walk in the Adelaide Zoo

On February 17, forty members and friends of the South Australian Branch had a walk around the Zoo with Director Mr Ed McAlister to look at historic plantings and current developments.

We started at 7.00pm at the Zoo Administration Building, originally built as a residence for the Curator in 1882. A large *Macadamia integrifolia* stands opposite this building and a little further away a large English Oak (*Quercus robur*) shades the Gibbons. Passing the Dragon Tree (*Dracaena draco*) planted late last century we walked under a number of Desert Ash (*Fraxinus oxycarpa*) which were widely planted in the zoo as fodder chiefly for the Elephant and Giraffe. An enormous Moreton Bay Fig (*Ficus macrophylla*) planted in 1878 as part of the botanic park before the zoo was established may be seen from all parts of the zoo and at over thirty metres high it is one of the largest in South Australia. The largest specimen in cultivation is growing at Swan Hill and was planted at the start of the Bourke and Wills expedition. By the reptile exhibit is a large Kurrajong, (*Brachychiton populneus*) the foliage also

relished by many mammals.

Opposite this tree are found the Scimitar-horned Onyx, beautiful animals with metre long horns. Adelaide Zoo is breeding Onyx as part of an international program to return endangered species to the wild. A group of Swamp Oak (*Casuarina glauca*) provides shade for Chamois and just inside the main entrance is a huge Aleppo Pine (*Pinus halepensis*). Surrounding the Elephant House are a number of Date Palms (*Phoenix dactylifera*) which in South Australia fruit regularly in the northern parts of the state and occasionally as far south as the Adelaide Plains. A towering Wilga (*Geijera parvifolia*), the largest in cultivation in South Australia, gives protection to a group of wood ducks.

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The Adelaide Zoo Administration Building built in 1882





A beautiful specimen of *Pinus halepensis*, Adelaide Zoo

Impressive specimens of Carob (*Ceratonia siliqua*), Silky Oak (*Grevillea robusta*), Queensland Kauri (*Agathis robusta*), White Fig (*Ficus virens*) and Red Cedar (*Toona australis*) are present. Also River Red Gums (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) the only relic of the indigenous flora of the Adelaide Plains found in the zoo.

A towering Wilga (*Geijera parvifolia*), the largest in cultivation in South Australia, gives protection to a group of wood ducks

The largest recent development in the zoo has been the 'World of Primates Exhibit'. A landscaped 'open' exhibit incorporating waterways and an island. This area is picturesque with flowering gums and Bougainvilleas providing colour complete with reeds and waterlilies in the ponds.

The direction the development of the zoo is taking is that of various climatic zones within the concept of 'Gondwanaland' and Adelaide Zoo is the first to undertake this exciting zonal initiative now a world wide trend. The evening walk proved both pleasant and informative and was enjoyed by all.

Richard Nolan

Visit to the North Yorke Peninsula

On Sunday April 18, a group of members and friends travelled North to visit some interesting sites on the upper part of the Yorke Peninsula. Our first stop was at the Moonta Miners' Cottage.

Moonta is a town built on the copper mining industry of the last century and the Miners' Cottage has been restored by the National Trust over the last 25 years. A humble dwelling, its garden was re-established by Mrs Ferguson in a turn of the century style.

The garden fence is manufactured from Mallee branches and flattened tin cans from the inner divisions. Brick and gravel (skimp remaining from the copper processing) paths separate beds which feature plants typical of the late nineteenth century, including a wide selection of herbs. Plant selection was very limited by the limestone soil and very low rainfall.

The cottage is well placed and the backdrop of an enormous skimp heap from the mining days provides a reminder of Moonta's early history.

We picnicked at Queen's Square in the township, a would-be elegant patch of green in the centre of town, flanked on all sides by substantial historic stone buildings, constructed during the early mining boom. Designed in 1870, the park has been the subject of a conservation study some years ago, aimed at returning it to its late nineteenth century form. Features included post and rail fences, gravel paths with bollards at road intersections, arbors and gas lamps. A Coalbrookdale cast iron fountain erected in 1893 stands in the centre dominated by large Moreton Bay Fig

trees (*Ficus macrophylla*) and White Poplars (*Populus alba*).

Our final visit for the day was to Paradean, a modern farm garden, some ten kilometres from Maitland. The owners, Mollie and Frank McIntyre, open the garden regularly throughout the year and are also part of the Open Garden Scheme. Since buying the farm in 1965 and bringing

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up thirteen children, the McIntyres have developed the garden in all directions. Without rigorous design, the garden meanders around trees and over fences and features a wide variety of exotic and Australian plants. Under the large Canary Island Date Palms there is a collection of birds nest ferns and a covered fishpond with a fern garden. Grevilleas, callistemons, eremophilas, melaleucas and correas are all represented in the native garden and the garden stands in marked contrast to the arid landscape outside the garden fences.

The McIntyres kindly provided the groups with afternoon tea and we returned to Adelaide, weary, but rewarded.

Nicola Downer

Sydney & Northern NSW Branch

Arcadia in Danger: Report on Workshop and Tour

On the weekend of July 10 and 11 the Parks and Gardens Conservation Committee of the National Trust NSW, in association with the AGHS held a workshop at the National Trust Centre at Observatory Hill in Sydney. The workshop aimed to draw attention to the importance of identifying and recording our State's significant gardens and to involve the participants in a discussion about the Trust's developing classification and recording guidelines.

Warwick Mayne-Wilson, the Chairman of the Parks and Gardens Conservation Committee, introduced the subject for the day, and was followed by a presentation by Richard Aitken of his experiences recording gardens in Victoria. This was extremely useful as Victoria is further advanced with their identification and recording of gardens. Richard highlighted the need to ensure that gardens in danger of being lost in our rapidly changing society, such as industrial and institutional gardens, are quickly identified. Many of these gardens represent valuable examples of a way of life or a philosophy and are too easily overlooked as we focus on gardens which are well-recognised. Other gardens under threat are large suburban gardens which are being subdivided due to the push for urban consolidation. Significant examples of these gardens need to be identified and recorded.

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Richard explained the garden typologies that the Victorian Branch of the National Trust were using and described how these differed from the Australian Heritage Commission's garden types. One point raised, was that in the 'cottage' garden category, perhaps it is the owner that should be classified – an interesting thought!

The next two speakers, Chris Betteridge and Michael Lehany both reinforced the idea that there are different types of gardens, some quite idiosyncratic or as Chris dubbed them, 'folk' gardens, which need to be recorded before they disappear. This can often occur very quickly as a result of changes in fashion often accompanying a change of owner. That old bugbear the question of 'taste' or rather, differing tastes, reared its head as we were exposed to a variety of interesting slides of a variety of gardens. One type of garden becoming rare is the small front garden of some terraces and semis bedecked with pot plants in recycled car tyres and other containers, the arrangement of which is the artistic expression of the owner. This type of garden may go the same way as the country Australian verandah garden of spent kerosene cans lovingly planted out with ferns and various cuttings. How many people can remember how to create a swan for the front lawn out of a car tyre?

Michael Lehany suggested the idea of making a personal map of gardens or places that are important to oneself, highlighting the aspects of it that are most memorable. This

exercise often reveals our personal tastes that have developed from garden experiences of our childhood. Another way of finding out what is important to a group is for each member of the group to take photos of the features of the garden that he or she likes. These techniques help to reveal what it is about a place that is perceived as being important.

We were fortunate that during the lunch break Ian Innes, who was responsible for the conservation and replanting of the garden at the Sydney Observatory, was available to show us around garden and explain the conservation strategies taken. On entering the garden, the sight of a magnificent Agave which had just flowered gave an distinct Victorian 'feel' to the place. Ian discussed the rationale for keeping what is now an unpopular plant, a large oleander, in the garden. This was one shrub that appeared in the old photographs of the observatory and the case for keeping it is a good example of the need for research into old gardens before decisions based on contemporary taste are made.

At the afternoon session David Beaver discussed the work recording gardens which he has been doing for the National Trust in NSW. This is a time consuming process and David stressed the necessity to research a garden well, the usefulness of aerial photographs, the threat to institutional gardens and the need to cast a broader net in the classification of gardens.

It was then the participants turn to do some work and we divided into groups and discussed the listing proposal form, the ease with which it could be used, and suggested improvements. Some participants from country areas expressed the feeling that some property owners may be concerned about having their gardens classified if then were not properly informed of implications of classification. The city experience has been that this has a positive effect, often increasing the value of properties.

Sunday's weather was a little cloudy but we set out for a relaxing day of garden viewing. Eryldene, the late Professor and Mrs Waterhouses's garden was first. The camellias were out and we were beguiled by the combination of Hardy Wilson's architecture and the wonderful garden. Many thanks to Tara Allen, the custodian of Eryldene, for making the garden available to us.

It was pleasing to see
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Admiralty House

Following this we visited Admiralty House and Kirribilli House and admired both gardens and harbour views. Thanks must be made to Derek Hallam of Australian Construction Services and Pat Garrett, Garden Supervisor Government House, for guiding us through the gardens and discussing the management of them. It was pleasing to see that an *Araucaria heterophylla* has been planted that will eventually be a replacement for an old and significant

specimen at Admiralty House. A Dragon Tree, palms and smoothly clipped hedges contribute to the textures in this garden by the harbour.

Judith Rintoul, who has been involved with the conservation work at Tresco at Elizabeth Bay, was with us to show us that garden. Situated on an extremely steep site it presents a challenge to any garden maker. The garden is dominated by a very large fig tree and, of course, the wonderful view down the harbour. Judith described the exten-

sive work on the retaining walls that has been undertaken and we were all intrigued by the boat-shaped harbour pool. An added treat was an inspection of the interior of Tresco due to the hospitality of Admiral and Mrs Hunt.

The day was very worthwhile. We all gained a deeper understanding of the history and significance of the gardens visited and we were able to discuss conservation policies and management issues with the experts present.

Colleen Morris

Eryldene, Gordon

The Colonial Revival house at Eryldene was designed by Hardy Wilson and built 1913-1914 for Professor E G Waterhouse who lived at Eryldene until his death in 1977 at the age of 96.

E G Waterhouse was Professor of Languages at the University of Sydney from 1924 to 1945 and a plantsman of world renown, particularly in relation to the propagation of the Camellia.

The co-operation between architect and client continued over many years and the garden at Eryldene is the setting for a number of interesting structures, all reflecting the pair's interest in colonial architecture and Georgian and eastern art, architecture and garden design.

The garden study (1921), Chinese tea house/tennis pavilion (1927), pigeonhouse and garden furniture blend with the house and garden to produce a unified whole which has remained intact for most of this century and is being respected and conserved by The Eryldene Trust which acquired the property in 1979.

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Eryldene is significant as the intact result of the creative union of two important figures in Australian life in the twentieth century, William Hardy Wilson and Eben Gowrie Waterhouse.

Eryldene has been described by Howard Tanner as perhaps the most important Colonial Revival garden to survive in Sydney. It has also been described by Juliet Ramsay as a suburban plantsman's garden in the Edwardian style.

The garden at Eryldene has added importance because it contains probably the most valuable collection of camellias in Australia including nearly 700 species, cultivars and hybrids.

In his 1926 article for *The Home* Professor Waterhouse wrote that 'a garden is both an expression of Nature and a statement of man's mind in reaction to the beauty that surrounds him. It can thus become must more than a place where flowers are grown'.

Eryldene is the perfect testimony of the late Professor's philosophy.

Christopher Betteridge

Source: Mary Davis, *Eryldene – Its Past, Its Present, Its Future*, c. 1980.



David Beaver

Japanese water basins with floating Camellia blooms, Eryldene

The garden study at Eryldene built in 1921



David Beaver

Admiralty House, Kirribilli

Admiralty House is an Italianate Victorian house built as a private residence Wotanga. In 1885 it was greatly enlarged and became the residence of the Commander-in-Chief for Her Majesty's ships of the Royal Navy Australian Station. Following the establishment of the Royal Australian Navy in 1913 the property was vacated and a lengthy dispute over title ensued. The State of New South Wales ultimately agreed to lend Admiralty House to the Commonwealth Government as the Sydney residence for the Governor-General of the day.

One of the original grand mansions of the Kirribilli peninsula, Admiralty House is set in 1.5 hectares of grounds which reflect the English romantic landscape school. As with Kirribilli House, there is surprisingly little documentary evidence about the garden. The major development of the garden took place between 1885 and 1913 and included the construction of the covered 'Admiral's Walk', now demolished, which led down to the berth for the Admiral's barge on the waterfront. The gardens contain individually significant trees, some of which were planted nearly one hundred years ago. This late Victorian conformation and character is regarded as being its most significant feature. It is also significant as the detailed and complementary setting for the historic residence.

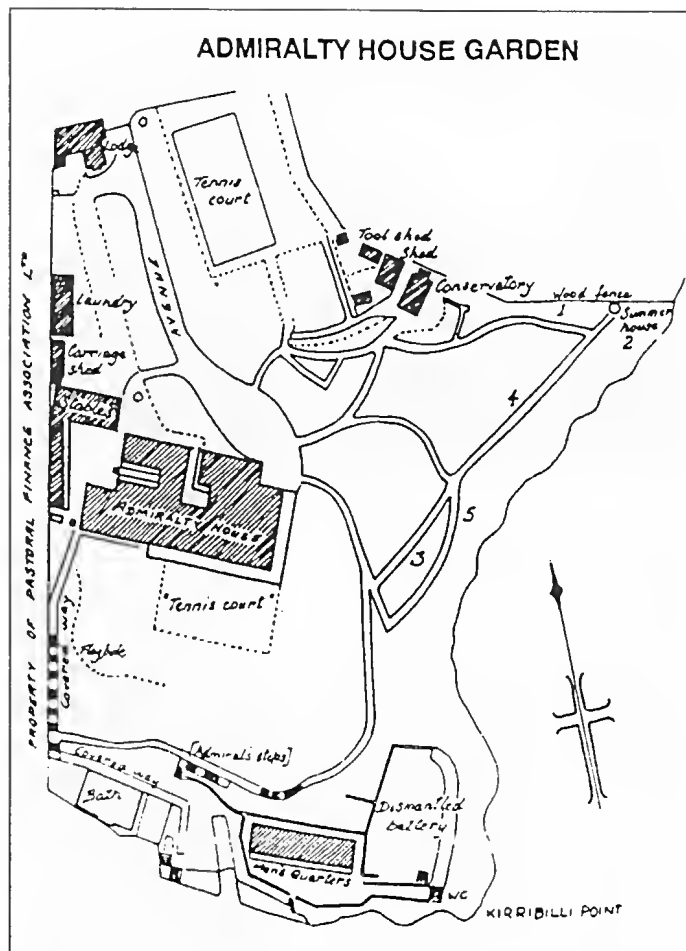
The garden of Admiralty House is a rare survivor of the late Nineteenth Century on Sydney Harbour foreshores and essentially retains its original form. The garden too is an important visual element of the harbour foreshores.

Admiralty House grounds have added significance resulting from the existence of 1850s fortifications which reflect the role of the site in the history of the Harbour's defences. The continued visual link with Fort Denison emphasises this unique feature.

Many significant figures in Australian naval and Vice-Regal history have enjoyed the gardens of Admiralty House as have members of the British Royal Family who have chosen to stay at Admiralty House in recent years.

Christopher Betteridge

View of Admiralty House and garden from the harbour's edge



Block plan of Admiralty House site redrawn from Drawing No. W1203 (1915) of the Commonwealth Department of Works and Railways, Naval Works Branch

Source: Admiralty House: A Conservation Plan

Source: 'Admiralty House Garden Conservation and Management Report', Australian Construction Services, Department of Administrative Services, 1988.

Kirribilli House

Kirribilli House is a picturesque Gothic residence dating from circa 1856. The property was resumed by the Commonwealth Government in 1920 and since 1957 has been used as a residence for official guests and as the Sydney residence of the Prime Minister of the day.

Surprisingly little documentary evidence of the grounds of Kirribilli House has come to light. The Lamont photographs taken at the turn of the century confirm that many of the Gardenesque features of the gardens were well and truly in place. Subsequent redevelopment works have been designed to incorporate these features which include the grassed earthen banks to the east and south-east of the house that provide a foreground between the house and the view eastwards towards Port Jackson, and the intermediate lawns around the rocky outcrops edging the harbour, all linked by a system of paths and stairs. From the house, banks of trees framed the harbour views while lesser vistas extended into the grounds of Admiralty House and across to Circular Quay. These old photographs also reveal a diverse assemblage of plant species and ornamental features, including statuary and gates. The Victorian interest in foliage and flowers is perpetuated today in the plantings of unusual and decorative species in the garden borders and beds.

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The garden at Kirribilli House has been described as significant as the setting of a significant house. The trees and lawns are important to the landscape of the house, and to the foreshore of Sydney Harbour. In addition, the stone wall and steps creating and enclosing the West Court and Lawn are significant as the setting for the late 1950s additions to the house, and as an example of 1950s garden design.

The garden occupies an area of 0.463 hectares. Kirribilli House and grounds were included in the Register of the National Estate in March 1978.

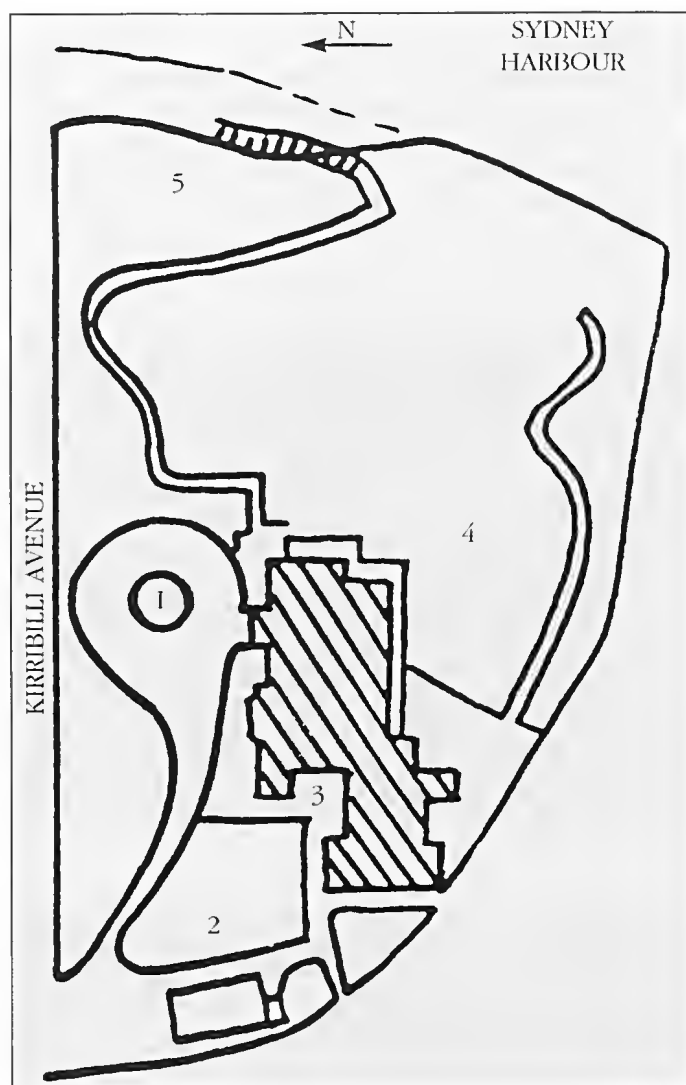
Christopher Betteridge

Source: 'Kirribilli House: Grounds Conservation and Management Plan', Australian Construction Services, 1988.

AGHS members (from left) Susie Hoppe, Michael Leboy and Lester Tropman enjoying the harbour views from the veranda of Kirribilli House



David Beaver



Kirribilli House Garden

Area 1: Entrance

The driveway and carriage loop were constructed in 1957 around the Illawarra Flame Tree, planted circa 1860. The sandstone edging extending from the drive on the southern side follows the line of a timber pulling fence evident in the Lamont photographs.

Area 2: Garage, Picking Garden and Service Court
The garage dates from the 1920s but the layout of the area has changed to accommodate functional requirements. Recent additions include the kitchen garden beside the path leading to Admiralty House.

Area 3: West Court

The courtyard was developed following renovations in 1957 and is now screened by the judicious use of plumbago hedge and the careful nurturing of a lemon tree. Old fashioned varieties of standard and climbing roses are a feature of this area.

Area 4: Lawns

Considerable terracing bedding and re-shaping of this area was carried out in 1957. An ornamental pond, now demolished, was added to the lower lawn. Remnants of original Victorian plantings of agaves, agapanthus, clivia and ivy can be seen in the north-eastern corner, where recent plantings of native species have been added for the interest of overseas visitors. Recent tree surgery work has re-opened the spectacular vistas to the harbour, now visible from the house.

Area 5: Harbour Foreshore

Work is underway in this area to remove the garden escapees including oleanders, olives, yucca and westringia and to re-introduce native species to the cliff face to provide a more attractive setting for the house viewed from the harbour.

The salt water pool (demolished) and the boat harbour are interesting nineteenth century features.

Tresco – Elizabeth Bay

The land on which Tresco stands was originally part of Alexander Macleay's property of fifty four acres. The original house was designed by Lieutenant Colonel Rowe, architect and past president of the NSW Institute of Architects. It was constructed in 1868 and was his family home. Subsequent additions were made by George Westgarth in 1883 and in the Victorian manner.

Tresco is a good example of a mid-Victorian residence and waterfront garden. The site was first developed by Rowe and later additions by Westgarth included the billiard room, wash-house, summerhouse and outhouses.

The Conservation Plan states there was 'generally a Repton approach of trees, lawn and flower beds' but elements of Victorian fashion were used in constructing the summerhouse, fernery and flower beds.

Since 1903 the Admiralty has been in possession of this property.

Tresco is the official residence of the Flag-Officer, Naval Support Command and is used both as a private residence by the current Admiral and his family and as a representational house for entertaining.



The boat-shaped harbour pool at Tresco

David Beaver

Conservation and restoration of the house and grounds was commenced in 1991 by Otto Cserhalmi & Partners, Conservation Architects and will continue in stages until its completion.

Judith Rintoul

LETTER

South Yarra, Victoria 3141

Whilst travelling in Canada recently I had the good fortune to find the accompanying stereo photograph, entitled 'An Australian home', in a junk shop situated in the Ontario equivalent of Maldon, Hahndorf or Berrima. I was intrigued because the photograph was published in New York in 1904 and was obviously intended to represent the quintessential Australian rural homestead for the North American market.

The property is certainly impressive and provides a wonderful gardenesque display of exotic trees and shrubs set

in the Australian bush. A lavish timber summerhouse overlooks the garden, yet the windmill is presented by the photographer as the dominant feature, signalling an oasis quality to this precious image.

The one mystery is the location of the 'Australian home'. It looks, to my eyes at least, to belong in Victoria, yet I am not familiar with the residence. Are any readers able to assist in the identification?

Richard Aitken
August 1993



Richard Aitken collection

JAMES M. DAVIS,
New York City, and St. Louis, Mo.

Copyright 1904, by H. W. Kilbourn.

15943. An Australian home.

STATE NEWS

Southern Highlands/ Southern NSW Branch

HANDS ON DAY AT PEJAR PARK

The second Hands-On Day held by the Southern Highlands/Southern NSW Branch of the AGHS was held on an unusually warm and sunny day in June at Pejar Park Woodhouselee outside Goulburn, home of Mr Hugh Bligh and created by his late mother Mrs Beatrice Bligh.

The garden is now mature and was therefore an ideal location for a demonstration by ACT tree surgeon Bruno Wright, who gave a thrilling display of the art of arboriculture that he practices in this area. He scaled a one hundred year old pine tree to demonstrate the removal of dead and dangerous branches in order to improve the life expectancy and appearance of the tree.

His equipment is very specialised and the appreciative crowd of about sixty hardy souls were fascinated to learn some of the principals of tree management and impressed by a stump grinder which removes the necessity for a day of back breaking work with a pick and shovel!

There were also demonstrations of rose pruning, stone wall construction and the division of perennials. A display of the use of worm castings for fertilizer and of the many and various landscape supplies available, including gravels,

bark, soils and edgings was accompanied by an interesting talk and demonstration by an irrigation consultant.

Michael Bligh arranged all the exhibitors and the members of our committee provided tempting morning and afternoon teas to sustain the fascinated band of picnickers who were able to wander around to whichever demonstration was currently of interest to them.

The Hands-On Day was once again hailed as a great success both from a financial point of view and also for those who participated.

Elizabeth Webster

Victorian Branch

Bolobek threatened by mining exploration

The Victorian Branch has recently written to the Minister for Energy and Minerals objecting to an application by Zeolite Australia Pty Ltd for a mining exploration licence over an area at Mount Macedon, including the property Bolobek. The license, sought to cover an 8 square kilometre area at Mount Macedon, seeks to establish the potential of peat deposits which later may be the subject of open cut mining.

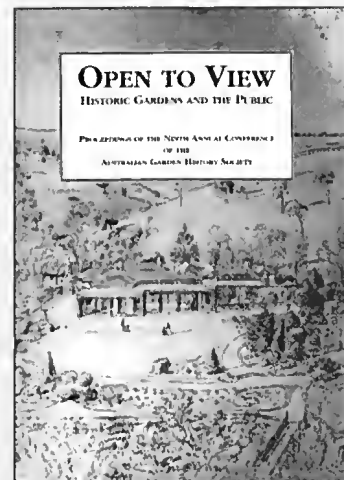
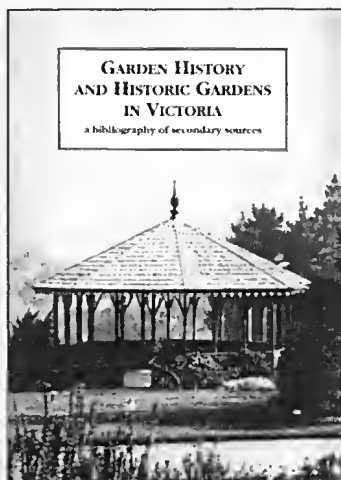
Helen Page

AUSTRALIAN GARDEN HISTORY SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS

Historic Gardens in Australia: Guidelines for the preparation of conservation plans by Chris Betteridge and Howard Tanner, 1983. Limited stocks of this title are still available for \$10 (includes postage) from the AGHS, c/- Royal Botanic Gardens, Birdwood Avenue, Victoria, 3141.

Garden History and Historic Gardens in Victoria: A bibliography of secondary sources, just published by the Victorian Branch. Lists over 300 books, reports and journal articles; essential reference work for students and researchers. \$5 (postage paid) from AGHS Office.

Open to View: Historic Gardens and the Public, proceedings of the ninth annual conference of the Australian Garden History Society (1988). Includes articles by Paul Fox, Peter Watts, James Hitchmough, John Foster and John Sales. \$10 (postage paid) from AGHS Office.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SEPTEMBER

VICTORIAN BRANCH

- Tuesday 7
A fascinating video made by the U.K. National Trust on the restoration of the unique garden at Biddulph Grange. **TIME:** 7.30pm. **VENUE:** Lecture Theatre, M.G.G.S. 82 Anderson Street, South Yarra. **COST:** Members \$5, Guests \$7. **ENQUIRIES:** National Office Ph. 650 5043.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN BRANCH

- Sunday 19
Spring Garden Visits: Inspect the Phillip's Garden at 9 Briar Avenue, Medindie and at 2.30pm inspect Bishops Court, Palmer Place. North Adelaide with afternoon tea in Garden. **TIME:** 1.00pm

OCTOBER

NATIONAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

- 10-15 October
Tasmanian Gardens in the Spring (see advertisement in this issue).
- 15-18 October
Annual conference in Tasmania.

SYDNEY & NORTHERN NSW BRANCH

- Saturday 23
Beecroft Garden Day: Five private gardens and the Lillian Frazer Garden will be open for inspection from 10.00am to 4.00pm. In addition this leafy area has a number of interesting Federation houses. There are several pleasant cafes and coffee shops in the village shopping centre. Or if you choose to picnic, the Beecroft Village Green is the place. **COST:** \$10.00. **BOOKINGS:** Beth Bond (02) 484 2941
- Saturday 30 and Sunday 31
Branch members will again be representing the AGHS at weekend in Singleton, NSW, arranged for garden and Rose lovers, titled The Romance of the Rose. **INFORMATION AND BOOKINGS** phone Beth Bond (02) 484 2941
- Sunday 31
The Branch will again be manning the stall at Gardenesque, Vacluse House. We are looking for assistance from members who are not going to Singleton. **CONTACT** Robin Lewarne ph (02) 220 1334 or Beth Bond.

VICTORIAN BRANCH

- Friday 22
Ms Ethne Clarke, author and keynote speaker at the Hobart Conference, will speak on *The Influence of Renaissance Gardens on Twentieth Century Design*. **TIME:** 6.30pm. **VENUE:** Radio Theatre, R.M.I.T. Building 9, cnr Bowen Lane and Franklin Street City. **BOOKINGS:** essential. **COST:** Members \$7, Guests \$10. **ENQUIRIES:** National Office Ph. 650 5043.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN BRANCH

- Tuesday 26
Lecture by Ethene Clarke (U.K.) on 'Italian Renaissance Gardens'. **TIME:** 7.00pm. **VENUE:** Baysmith Theatre, Scotch College, Blythwood Road, Torrens Park.

NOVEMBER

WEST AUSTRALIAN BRANCH

- Sunday 7
Guided Tour of Narrows Interchange Park. Commentary by its designer John Oldham
- Saturday 27 & Sunday 28
Country Gardens Tour – Pinjarra/Waroona (Combined with Heritage Rose Society)

VICTORIAN BRANCH

- Wednesday 3
Dr Christopher Ridgway (U.K.) will speak on the history of the landscape at Castle Howard, Yorks. U.K. (setting for *Brideshead Revisited*). **TIME:** 6.30 pm. **VENUE:** Radio Theatre, RMIT Building 9, cnr Bowen Lane and Franklin Street City. **BOOKINGS:** essential. **COST:** Members \$7, Guests \$10. **ENQUIRIES:** National Office Ph. 650 5043
- Saturday 6 and Sunday 7
Cathedral Ranges Gardens and natural landscape with Rodger and Gwen Elliot. **COST:** Members \$70, Guests \$85. **INFORMATION AND BOOKING FORM:** from National Office Ph. 650 5043.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN BRANCH

- Saturday 13
Newmans Nursery Picnic Day: Join staff and customers on a walk to the old Nursery in Austley Park Reserve. **NO FEE.** **BOOKINGS** are appreciated. **CONTACT:** Newman's Nursery 08 (264 2661). Bring Picnic Lunch.

DECEMBER 1993

VICTORIAN BRANCH

- Monday 6
BYO picnic followed by a talk at 8.00 pm. **HAMPERS:** to order from National Office. **TIME:** From 6.00 pm. **VENUE:** Herbarium Lawn. **COST:** Members free, Guests \$5.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN BRANCH

- Friday 3
Christmas Drinks at Walnut Hill, 5 Walker Street Stirling, the Garden of Mr Trevor Nottle. **TIME:** 6.00pm.

JANUARY

VICTORIAN BRANCH

- Wednesday 26-Sunday 30
Kosciusko National Park walking tour with Rodger and Gwen Elliot, staying at the Chalet at Charlotte Pass. **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION** contact the National Office ph. (03) 650 5043.



John Brown Photography P. L.

Above: William Tell Shelter at Melbourne's Royal Botanic Gardens, pictured after restoration

Left: Mrs Marian Brookes, Deputy Chairman of the Royal Botanic Gardens Board and former AGHS Victorian Branch President (centre), Sir Rupert Hamer, former Victorian Premier and long time garden supporter (right) and Mr Keith Fitzmaurice, then Chairman of the Gas and Fuel Corporation (left) at the official opening of the restored William Tell Shelter on 22 June 1993



John Brown Photography P. L.

William Tell burnt

The recently restored William Tell Rest House at Melbourne's Royal Botanic Gardens was destroyed by fire in the early hours of Saturday, 10 July 1993. This rest house was erected late last century and it is likely that the design was based on Director William Guilfoyle's memories of Switzerland from his European travels in 1890. The destruction was particularly unfortunate as the structure had only been reopened less than a month after conservation work directed by Allom Lovell and Associates with generous sponsorship by the Gas and Fuel Corporation. The Royal Botanic Gardens Board has resolved to reconstruct the shelter to enable its distinctive form to once again enliven this portion of the gardens and lake edge.

David Gabriel-Jones